

Death Squads in Global Perspective

Murder with Deniability

Edited by

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CHAPTER 1

Death Squads: Definition, Problems, and Historical Context

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DEATH SQUADS ARE FOUND ALL OVER THE WORLD TODAY, and in just the last 30 years have been responsible for hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of deaths.¹ They did not disappear with the end of the Cold War, and they are certainly not a uniquely Latin American or even a "third world" problem. At the same time, they differ from other tools of repression in a number of significant aspects, notably in the way they mix state and private interests and in the way they call into question the very legitimacy and substance of the state. Their prevalence, destructive capacity, and unique nature all combine to make them an important object of study.

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. First, it will provide a working definition of death squads, review the literature on them, and set the stage for the case studies which follow. Second, it will call attention to several problems in our understanding of the phenomenon. Third, it will propose a historical framework for examining the issue that promises to resolve many of these difficulties.²

Definition

Death squads are clandestine and usually irregular organizations, often paramilitary in nature, which carry out extrajudicial executions and other violent acts (torture, rape, arson, bombing, etc.)

against clearly defined individuals or groups of people. Murder is their primary or even sole activity. Except in the rare case where an insurgent group forms them, death squads operate with the overt support, complicity, or acquiescence of government, or at least some parts of it.³ In many cases, government security forces have participated directly in the killing. Yet at the same time, death squads may be privately constituted, almost always involve the support and participation of elements outside of government, and develop considerable independence from their backers.⁴ Except in unusual circumstances, organizations or units involved in killings of combatants in the context of war between sovereign states, even where irregular resistance forces are involved, do not fall under this definition, although the killing of noncombatants may indeed do so.⁵

Death squads must be distinguished from three other distinct but closely related phenomena: assassination, vigilantism, and terrorism. Death squad activity and assassination lie on a continuum, and it is both difficult and of limited utility to try to identify the exact point where the transition occurs. One major difference lies in scale: assassination typically targets a single individual, or at most a small handful of individuals. Death squads operate on a much larger scale, and their victims typically number in the thousands.⁶ Assassination usually targets prominent members of an elite or political leaders. Death squads may also target these elites, but their scope of victims is likely to be much wider. Moreover, aside from targeting individuals, death squads usually also attempt to spread terror among the general population through various means. Assassination may be the work of a single individual and rarely involves more than a small number of actual killers organized for a single killing. Death squads have a more permanent (if still ad hoc) organization and are set up to conduct ongoing operations on a fairly large scale.

Death squads are often treated or discussed as an aspect of vigilantism.⁷ Vigilantism may be defined as the temporary usurpation of the state's powers of law and monopoly on violence by groups of ordinary citizens, usually to control crime or enforce social norms.⁸ Vigilantes most often claim to be the enforcers of a kind of popular justice. The differences between death squads and vigilantism lie in the fact that death squads directly involve the state in addition to other actors, while vigilantism comes primarily at the initiative of private (civil) interests and therefore involves a greater degree of spontaneity.⁹ Death squads tend to punish political acts and to be

concerned with issues that are wider than purely local ones. They also operate on a larger geographic scale and with more coordination and planning; vigilantism tends to be more locally based and grassroots in origin.

In reality, though, there is considerable overlap between the two categories. Some death squads do act to combat crime or enforce social norms. Similarly, vigilantism often involves state or elite influence and participation, even instigation, and is generally both covert in nature and murderous in outcome, all features that make a clear distinction between it and death squad activity difficult. The members of death squads may even see themselves as vigilantes working to enforce justice. To further muddy the waters, death squad activity is also frequently portrayed or disguised as spontaneous acts of vigilantism in order to hide its true sponsorship.¹⁰ One good example is the government-sponsored and -encouraged "vigilante" groups formed in apartheid-era South Africa, which not only committed murder themselves but were consciously and deliberately used to supplement and cover the activities of government death squads; another would be government claims in El Salvador that the acts of death squads were "simply" the spontaneous vigilante acts of patriotic citizens.¹¹ Yet, the proximity of the two concepts is due to more than the problem of translating practice into theory or to conscious manipulation and actually points to something characteristic of death squads. Even in death squads that are well disciplined and closely tied to legitimate state structures there is still an element of spontaneity that makes them resemble vigilantism. This comes because of the inevitable insinuation of private interests into the actions of death squads, be it in the form of individual abuse of power or of direct involvement of organized private interest groups. This public-private mix is in fact one of the most important characteristics of death squads.

Terrorism is also closely related to death squad activity, but again should be distinguished from it. Terrorism is the commission of acts of murder and extreme, exceptional brutality and destruction in order to influence groups of people to act or refrain from acting in certain ways. The people terrorism seeks to influence are generally different from its targets, which gives it a somewhat random, unpredictable quality. The violence is rarely committed for its own sake, at least when it begins, but serves rather to send a message. This only heightens the terror, and terrorism works through extreme

fear. Death squads may well be a part of a government strategy of state terrorism, and they very often attempt to use terror themselves, for example when they publicly announce their killings, use torture prior to murdering their victims, or leave the bodies of their victims in conspicuous places. Clearly, the two concepts easily exist simultaneously. And yet, there is an important distinction between these concepts. Terrorism differs from death squad activity in that its targets are largely instrumental or symbolic and the main effect is intended to be felt elsewhere. To put it another way, in terrorism, murder and other dreadful acts are committed to send a message, while for death squads, murder is the main point.¹² Once again, in practice, the two concepts are difficult to separate: terrorists may intend to send a message, but they usually pick targets as painful for their enemies as possible, so that the infliction of damage can quickly overshadow the sending of a message. In a similar way, death squads nearly always include a terrorist component, for their killings are usually very public and particularly gruesome. The distinction between the two remains an academic one; in practice it is often much less clear.

Conceptual distinctions such as the ones made above matter, but in actual situations of state violence, they may be much less clear than they seem on paper. The three taxonomic categories "death squad," "vigilantism," and "terrorism" are clearly distinct in the abstract, but much less so in actual practice. Death squads nearly always show aspects of both terrorism and vigilantism in their operations, so it is prudent not to draw too fine a point about the differences between the three concepts. Conceptually, such distinctions are useful, but seem puny when compared to the realities of modern violence, and do not matter much to the victims.

Special Factors

Death squads have several key, distinguishing characteristics that make them either unique or unusual within the panoply of possible ways of organizing violence. First of all, they are *covert*, without necessarily, however, being *secret*. The solution to this apparent paradox lies in distinguishing organization from actions. What makes death squads different from the murderous use of regular police and military forces is that death squads give no visible indication that they exercise *legitimate* use of force and they make no

acknowledgment of whose orders they follow. Regular military forces and most police wear uniforms, which shows that they act in the name of the state and that the power they exercise is therefore legitimate. Even plainclothes police are required to carry and display identification marking them as legitimate representatives of state power. Regular security forces also have a formal organizational structure and clear chain of command which allows responsibility for their actions to be determined. Death squads have neither. This makes it possible for the state (and/or any other backers they may have) to claim no knowledge of or influence over death squads, and therefore to deny any responsibility for their actions.¹³ On the other hand, if the work of death squads is intended to spread terror, then their acts cannot be kept completely secret, for then they would lose much of their intended effect on their targets. For this reason, most death squads (though by no means all) make sure that their actions are very public: they leave their victims to be found in public places, they torture and mutilate them in memorable and horrific ways, and they sometimes even leave notes or visible signs that they were victims of a particular unit. In some case, lists of intended victims are even published in advance in public media.¹⁴ Nor is state complicity or support a real secret for long: death squads may visibly be made up of members of the security forces, and the sheer lack of state success in stopping them is generally enough to raise the reasonable assumption that the state therefore does not want them to stop.¹⁵ Hence, death squads generally involve the paradox of being secretive and covert organizations that nevertheless often act in particularly public and gruesome fashion.

But this is not the most significant paradox involving death squads. One of the central, defining characteristics of states is that they maintain a monopoly over the use of violence. In a sense, the prime task of modern states is to organize and control violence.¹⁶ And yet in tolerating or using death squads, states inevitably compromise their defining monopoly, often putting their very legitimacy into question. Given this paradox, the central question regarding death squads is why states would choose to use them at all, given that other, ostensibly equally effective means are at their disposal in the form of regular military and police forces. The answer is quite complex, and not completely clear.

It is easy to see why states (and/or other backers) lose control over death squads: their irregular, informal organization and the

demands of covert action make the exercise of control very difficult. Moreover, death squads exist to act outside of the law: by definition, their "job" is to commit extrajudicial murder. Once the decision is made to cross the line of legality, where are they to stop? The smooth action of death squads practically requires that their members be granted the widest possible exemption from prosecution and interference. That this often leads to personal abuses for private gain is easily understood. But the independence of death squads may also mean that they develop their own political agendas separate from their backers, while as appendages of a bureaucratic system (no matter how informal their organization), they often act according to organizational imperatives of competition with other agencies.¹⁷

One element enhancing the independence and uncontrollability of death squads is the curious fact that most of them arise out of a peculiar symbiosis between the state and nonstate interests. For example, death squads in El Salvador involved the considerable support and influence of large landowners and were often directed by a political movement (the ARENA party), even though some arose organizationally within state agencies like the National Guard and all worked in some form of cooperation with state forces to stamp out an internal insurgency. The influence of these nonstate forces may possibly arise because of the inability of states to prevent powerful social groups from killing their opponents, though even then, states may indeed welcome such "help." Much more likely, though, is the fact that the need to maintain plausible deniability of state involvement often forces the creators of death squads to seek aid from private groups and individuals.¹⁸ After all, one way to establish deniability is to have the killing organized and done by people who are not formally or officially associated with the state. The desire to make death squads seem like a spontaneous expression of the public will also leads to the involvement of nonstate actors.

There are a number of contributing factors to the insinuation of private interests into death squads. Since death squads are not part of the formal organizational structure of the security forces and state support for them must remain covert, they are difficult for states to finance. Private interests may be asked to provide covert funding. This was the case in El Salvador, for example, where wealthy exiles financed many death squads.¹⁹ Another factor may sometimes lie in a sense of professionalism within the security

forces, which can lead to a desire to stay apart from death squads for a variety of reasons,²⁰ and in the difficulty in general of pushing humans to commit murder without a strong normative justification.²¹ Another contributing factor lies in the modern concept of citizenship itself. What distinguishes a citizen from a subject, after all, is that the citizen feels a personal responsibility for the well-being of the state. This sense of personal responsibility for the state may lead individuals or groups to act according to what they perceive is required, even if this means breaking other norms of behavior such as the law.²² Ironically, death squads may be partially motivated by the very sense of social responsibility that is a cornerstone of both nationalism and democracy, and they may be encouraged by the very professionalism in the armed forces that many see as a barrier to state terrorism.

Literature Review

There is surprisingly little research that deals specifically with death squads. Much of what does exist is concerned with case studies of death squad activity, and very little takes a synthetic or theoretical approach.

The largest body of work dealing specifically with death squads comes from either the human rights and development community²³ or the media.²⁴ This research, often conducted at great risk, has provided much of the basic information now available on the subject. It has mainly been interested in exposing the problem and trying to stop the killing and has almost always focused on specific case studies.

In the scholarly literature, death squads fall under the larger category of "state violence" or "state terrorism" and are sometimes also treated as a kind of vigilantism, and so a discussion of the literature on these broader categories of violence must come first. There is now a fairly large body of literature on state violence and state terrorism.²⁵ Among the most important of these are a number of works, which came from George Lopez, Raymond Duvall, and especially Michael Stohl in a series of publications in the 1980s.²⁶ In 1983 Duvall and Stohl developed an "expected utility" model for the employment of terror by states: terror is used because it appears either more effective or less ineffective than alternative means.²⁷ They specify that weak states tend to use it when it is perceived as

better (or at least less bad) than the alternatives, whereas strong states use it only when highly isolated from the international community or when they are either militaristic states or feel they have a special ideological mission, as in the National Socialist "mission" to cleanse the world of Jews.²⁸ Also in 1986, Stohl identified three additional variables that can constrain or promote state terrorism:

- the cultural value of violence in a given place
- the social distance between killers and victims, or the ease with which the targets can be denied human attributes
- the routinization of violence within a context of bureaucratic irresponsibility.²⁹

A further development and synthesis of the work by Stohl, Lopez, and Duvall was done by Ted Robert Gurr in the same year.³⁰ He also defined state terror as a rational, intentional choice. He listed a range of factors likely to lead to the employment of state violence, even terror, against domestic populations. Gurr postulates, as a necessary precondition for the use of state terror, the existence of a class, group, or party that the ruling elite sees as a threat to its continued rule. The greater this threat, the greater the likelihood of violence. Similarly, the greater the latent support for this challenger group within the population, the greater the likelihood of violence. Challengers to the system who use violence are more likely to be met with terror than those who don't. Furthermore, state terror is more likely to be used against marginal groups rather than against groups with close ties to ruling elites. According to Gurr, weak regimes are more likely to use terror than strong ones, and elites that come to power through violence are more likely to use it to stay in power than those that didn't. The successful situational uses of terror are likely to lead to its permanent use, whereas the initial decision to use terror is usually modeled on outside or earlier examples: states tend to imitate each other. Gurr states that democratic values and traditions are likely to inhibit the use of violence by states against their own citizens, while the greater the racial, class or religious heterogeneity of a society and the greater its social stratification, the greater the likelihood of state violence. He argues that ethnic or religious minority elites in highly stratified societies are very likely to use terror against their populations. In fact, Gurr maintains that the greater the degree of stratification, the greater the likelihood of vio-

lence. Naturally, external threats are likely to cause force to be used against internal opponents, and regimes involved in the proxy conflicts of major powers are highly likely to use the most extreme forms of terror. Regimes peripheral to world capitalism, especially when they are autarchic and less vulnerable to international sanctions, are also more likely to use violence. For Gurr, the biggest predictor of all for state terror is the existence of units or institutions specialized in combating terrorism.

Other approaches to explaining state violence and terror include the cultural school of anthropologists, who see violence as learned or as the result of socialization³¹; those who see it as a fundamental part of totalitarianism³²; dependency and social structure theorists, who see it as resulting from the imbalanced character of existing North-South economic relations³³; and imperialism theorists, who use a paradigm of global structural violence resulting from capitalist imperialism.³⁴ Finally, some theorists simply blame the United States for most, if not all, state terror.³⁵

Another common way of explaining some forms of state terror is to discuss it in terms of vigilantism, and the relationship between the two concepts has already been discussed above.³⁶ Peter C. Sederberg, in particular, provides valuable insights. He sees vigilantism as being "often the reaction to a widening range of officially tolerated innovation and [even] the existence of state-sponsored innovation."³⁷ Vigilante groups are then organized either privately or by the state against those seen as real or symbolic threats to existing order. According to his research, vigilante groups tend to recruit those whose status is insecure or who have authoritarian personalities.

This relatively recent work on state violence has greatly increased our understanding of the circumstances under which states opt to exercise extreme violence against their own people. Unfortunately, none of it really explains why certain forms of violence such as death squads are used in any particular case and not other forms. It also rarely even mentions death squads at all, and if so, only in passing as one of many possible forms of state violence.

There is a fairly small body of scholarly literature that deals with death squads directly and specifically instead of subsuming them under the larger category of state terrorism. Most of it, like the work of journalists and human rights workers, is in the form of case studies focusing on a single country or at most a limited geographic area.³⁸ While all of these are important and supply crucial

information, they generally do not attempt to develop a comprehensive idea of why death squads are used or to draw broader conclusions about their nature. A few works do take a more synthetic and comprehensive approach, however. One of the most important is a short article by David Mason and Dale Krane.³⁹ Much like more general work on state terrorism, they see the use of death squads as a rational choice for comprador regimes. Once countries adopt an agro-export growth model that ties them closely to the world capitalist system, they lack the resources to alleviate mass unrest provoked by concomitant economic changes (unemployment, expropriation, depressed wages, etc.). Their easiest response to this dissatisfaction is violence. This, in turn, leads to popular violence in response, and a process of mutual escalation follows. Governments in this kind of situation often resort to the use of death squads. State terror is unable to resolve the conflict, however, so that after a period of great brutality and destruction, the result is ultimately mutual exhaustion and stalemate. In effect, the weakness of the state precludes less violent alternatives to death squads and terror. The problem with Mason and Krane's approach is that it is narrowly focused on economics and state weakness and does not explain the use of death squads by states that have significant resources. Their theory also does not explain why death squads are used in preference to other means of repression, other than citing the need for reasonable denial.

Perhaps the best of the handful of studies specifically on death squads is in the work of Miles Wolpin.⁴⁰ He places the responsibility for their existence squarely on states and their leaders, citing only a handful of cases in which they might have been formed simply because states were too weak to prevent them.⁴¹ He says that death squads are particularly likely to be employed against strong, urban-based opposition groups and where deniability is considered necessary for domestic and/or international reasons. He sees states using them mainly where an opposition movement is both growing and a major threat to a highly stratified exploitative system. He holds that their use is also likely if success in mobilizing public bias against popular, left-wing, or ethnic opposition movements is problematic; in this case, death squads are employed to compensate for a lack of sufficient electoral mobilization against the perceived internal threat, especially in low-income countries. He also raises the important proposition that death squads may be used in weak states sim-

ply because they may turn out to be more "efficient" than other state sectors.

Wolpin stresses the importance of deniability in choosing to use death squads, but doesn't really say why, other than to serve as a fig leaf for those elements among a ruling coalition who do not want to acknowledge the state's use of violence. This is not a sufficient explanation, but it is a start. Wolpin is actually best in discussing why states may resort to violence,⁴² and he also does well to include acknowledgment of cultural factors and specifically local context in his analysis. Nevertheless, he doesn't really add much to our knowledge of why some states use death squads instead of other forms of violence. He still regards death squads mainly as a function of the degree of a state's economic stratification and exploitation; he sometimes conflates vigilantism and death squads; and though he formally rejects it, he still implies that death squads are the recourse of "weak" states.

Wolpin himself acknowledges the limits of our understanding of death squads and calls for more research, particularly the need to look further at the impact of child-rearing practices and other cultural factors on the willingness to use violence, the need for measures of the thresholds and degrees of socioeconomic oppression leading to death squads, and the need for more study of elite group cohesion, quality, and values.

One new study that sheds light on many of these issues is a collection of work by a group of anthropologists edited by Jeffrey Sluka.⁴³ This new work adds valuable new perspectives to the study of death squads and state violence. Current research on state violence seems to be growing more and more open to a consideration of cultural factors specific to a given society, precisely the sort of question anthropology as a discipline is able to answer.⁴⁴ Future research, freed from a Cold War context and an overemphasis on economic factors as the ultimate origin of all evil, will certainly advance our understanding of death squads greatly.

Problem Areas

The question of why some states use death squads instead of other means of violent repression is a central one for human rights practitioners and academics alike, and neither group has yet found a

definitive answer. An answer can be approached only by citing a number of contributing elements simultaneously.

The thesis that death squads may exist because a given state is simply too weak to prevent powerful social interests from engaging in murder can be rejected in all but a handful of cases. It sounds plausible, yet in practice, the state, rather than being a "victim," actually either initiates the formation of death squads or cooperates with them. The "weak state" thesis has additional problems. To begin with, the concept of a "weak" state is seldom defined in any rigorous manner, and all too often it amounts to the expression of an ideological bias: "weak" states are those that are simply not as "democratic" as "we" are. It also implies a strict dichotomy between "weak" and "strong" states that usually does not reflect reality. Modern states, even "weak" ones, are complex, and given the multitude of functions even relatively feeble states have to fulfill today, it is quite possible for a state to be strong in some areas and weak in others. Finally, even keeping the previous point in mind, the sheer number of deaths caused by some death squads makes it perverse to attribute them to any form of state weakness.

The kind of economic argument advanced by Mason and Krane, that states dependent on an agro-export economy lack the resources to satisfy domestic demands and are therefore forced to rely on extreme violence, has certainly been shown to apply to numerous situations in which death squads have been used.⁴⁵ Much the same may be said of the "expected utility" argument of Duvall, Stohl, Gurr, and others. Yet both may explain the recourse to state terror, but not which type, and are therefore only parts of the puzzle.

One major factor for the use of death squads lies in the need of states to deny that they are breaking established norms of behavior. The modern state is bound by a whole range of internal and external norms that place strict limits on a state's range of options—if respected. Only death squads and other covert means provide plausible deniability of state involvement in violent acts. Domestically, citizens expect the rule of law, adherence to certain norms of behavior, or at least predictable behavior from their governments. States may engage in covert violence in order to protect the sensibilities of domestic populations and thus preserve state legitimacy.⁴⁶ This is, however, a fairly weak explanation, given that death squads often make their acts public to sow terror, and given the fact that

plausible deniability of state complicity in death squad violence can hardly be maintained domestically for long, if it ever works at all.

The rise in interest in human rights and legal norms for state behavior internationally since at least the late nineteenth century also plays a role.⁴⁷ Today states find themselves under scrutiny from foreign governments, both allied and enemy; semigovernmental agencies such as the World Bank; and a multitude of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Greenpeace, not to mention the international media.⁴⁸ Failure to meet international norms of behavior can have all sorts of serious repercussions today, including loss of foreign loans and investment, diminution or loss of foreign aid, loss of tourist revenue, trade boycotts, etc. States wishing to use extreme forms of extralegal violence thus have every reason to appear uninvolved. Though the charade doesn't usually last very long, it is difficult to prove government complicity in death squad actions—such proof usually comes at great cost to local human rights organizations and monitors, who are themselves often among the prime targets of the death squads.⁴⁹ This is one of the many cruel ironies that crop up in connection with state violence, for it is quite likely that the increased concern for human rights has itself inadvertently been a contributing factor in the use of covert violence by governments, and in particular, in the use of death squads.⁵⁰

Wolpin provides other elements of an answer. His prediction that death squads are more likely to be employed against successful, urban-based insurgencies and in electoral systems where it is impossible to mobilize sufficient electoral potential against popular left-wing and/or ethnically based opposition movements does at least address the question of when death squads are likely to be used rather than other forms of violence, though he still doesn't go very far in saying why this is the case. He also underscores the importance of deniability and mentions the probable importance of cultural factors. Most important of all, his notion that death squads may be used because they are perceived as being more efficient than other state agents is a useful way of getting at relative areas of state weakness, without falling into a weak-state, strong-state dichotomy.⁵¹ Still, while this provides a number of important pieces of the answer, it is not complete.

The influence of ideological and cultural factors coming from both internal and external actors bears future research, as numerous

authors have already concluded.⁵² Several authors have explored the influence of national security doctrine that became popular among noncommunist state leaders during the Cold War and may perhaps have included at least a regional exchange of information on tactics, including death squads.⁵³ Yet once again, neither of these is able to explain why the choice of death squads over other forms of violence is made.

Finally, one other reason for the decision to use death squads may be the simple calculation that the state faces an extraordinarily dangerous situation that requires extraordinary methods. An inclination to see the threat of even moderate change in the status quo, particularly when the challenge is ideologically based, as being profoundly threatening and justifying the most extreme measures imaginable is nothing new in human history, yet provides a powerful explanation for the panic of established elites in the face of even modest change. This again begs the question of why states support or tolerate death squads and not some other, equally violent approach to solve their most intractable and existential political or social challenges.

Historical Interpretation

What may be needed to advance the understanding of death squads, and in particular to begin to better answer the question of why states resort to death squads as opposed to other means of repression, is a more historically based explanation.

The process begins by locating death squads in time. How far back does it make sense to speak about them? Though the use of violence by rulers against their own people goes as far back as recorded history, it makes no sense to label every instance of this type as a death squad.⁵⁴ One key is that by definition, death squads carry out "extrajudicial murder" and other extrajudicial acts. The operant phrase here is "extrajudicial"; death squads as such could not have existed before the establishment of the principle that even rulers or states must respect the rule of law, or before the establishment of a state monopoly on the use of force (in Western Europe, roughly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries).⁵⁵

But there is good reason to set the temporal limit for the existence of death squads even later: one of the most interesting charac-

teristics of death squads is the fact that they are not always simply the tools of the state. As already mentioned, they often draw support, motivation, and resources from outside official circles, and they usually develop their own agendas and exercise some amount of independence from their sponsors. What this means is that death squads cannot exist without a strong degree of social plurality and without the historical development of the notion that private individuals can and should play a role in the political process. In short, death squads cannot exist before the concept of citizenship does.⁵⁶

Another important clue for situating death squads historically lies in the clandestine nature of death squad activity. By both definition and practice, death squads operate in the shadows and margins of society. The secretive nature of death squads has some "tactical" purpose to heighten the terror produced by their activities, but this is clearly not the main reason for it. Instead, death squads operate in a clandestine manner so that their backers (usually governments) may plausibly deny to both a domestic and a foreign audience that they are connected to the death squads. Domestically, this makes no sense before the existence of the concept that governments derive their legitimacy from the consent of the governed, and that this consent is based, among other things, on holding to the rule of law. Externally, it makes no sense without the idea that the opinion of foreign states and their citizens is also an important aspect of a state's legitimacy. Thus, we can't speak of the existence of death squads before the development of states that have a monopoly on the use of force and are expected to abide by laws. Only after this time do the things death squads do become unusual or extraordinary. Similarly, the creation of the autonomous citizen as a political actor, the invention of mass politics, and the development of a "world court of public opinion" are all crucial prerequisites for the existence of what we call death squads. Therefore death squads cannot reasonably be said to exist before the French Revolution and the early nineteenth century, which means before the creation of the modern state.

One of the first proto-death squads was the early Ku Klux Klan, a secret society originally created by former Confederate soldiers in the American South just after the end of the American Civil War. It conducted death-squad-like killings and other terrorist acts against recently freed black slaves, "carpetbaggers," and those thought to collaborate too closely with the agents of the victorious federal

government engaged in "reconstructing" the recently rebellious South. Though it was formed in opposition to the legitimate state government, unlike most modern death squads, it acted in the name of a former, defeated Confederate one, and in the name of a system of racially based social stratification and economic exploitation. Otherwise, in its murderous intent, links to private elite interests, and covert nature, it very closely resembles modern death squads.⁵⁷ Note that it originated in what is not commonly referred to as a weak state, nor one that was uniformly in the thrall of an export-oriented agricultural policy geared to the capitalist world market.⁵⁸

The Crisis of the Modern State and "Subcontracting"

One potentially fruitful approach is to consider death squads as one—albeit extreme—manifestation of what may be called the crisis of the twentieth-century state.

The modern state is conceived in terms of force. In his classic definition of the state, the nineteenth-century German scholar Max Weber defined the state as "that human community, which, within a given territory, claims for itself the legitimate monopoly of physical violence."⁵⁹ Developing out of the medieval kingdoms of Western Europe, the history of the modern state is linked to violence from its very beginning.⁶⁰

Only in the nineteenth century did the western state take the form that has become the model and norm today for all modern states. At that time, and under the impact of classical liberalism, the role of the state was defined in fairly narrow terms, and thus so were the means that the state had at its disposal to fulfill that role.⁶¹ The continuing industrial revolution, the growing complexity of society, and the impact of world war—in short, ongoing modernization—have all served to widen the role of the state. The means at the disposal of states have not always kept up with this expansion, so that in the twentieth century, states have increasingly felt it necessary to reach outside themselves—that is, to reach outside that normative liberal-legal framework established in the nineteenth century—in order to find the tools or helpers necessary to perform all the tasks at hand. This has led to the widespread use of semistate or semi-public entities by modern states to "subcontract" important political, social, and economic tasks. Because of this, the modern state bleeds sovereignty, which is one of its defining characteristics.

This process may be initiated either by the state or by private interest groups or both. Benign examples of the process include such diverse organizations as the Boy Scouts⁶² and regulated monopolies such as the former Bell Telephone System. Yet in crisis situations or situations in which the legitimacy of states is called into question, this "subcontracting" can assume more malevolent forms, such as the formation or toleration of paramilitary auxiliaries or, in extreme cases, death squads. This way of looking at death squads certainly fits within a rational choice model, and it has the advantage of placing death squads in a larger context that is common to all modern states, "weak" or "strong," and irrespective of their position in the world capitalist system. Further, it is consistent with scholarship that sees an increased danger of extreme violence in situations in which states or elites are in the process of rapid modernization.⁶³ Thus, cases such as the early KKK in the mid-to-late-nineteenth-century United States or Spain in the 1980s, neither involving a state that was a weak state or was in a dependent position within the world capitalist system at the time, do not appear to be such anomalies. Moreover, it overcomes the pejorative connotations associated with the weak-state hypothesis. The point is not to discount state weakness or economic factors in making the use of death squads more likely, but rather to escape the danger of failing to see the universal possibility that any state may choose to use death squads.

Modern states have a habit of subcontracting. In certain crisis situations (and here the literature on state violence in general is still very useful), this subcontracting can occur even at the risk of diminishing the states' legitimacy by violating the law, or by compromising its monopoly on the use of violence.⁶⁴ This would then place death squads at the outer limits of a much larger continuum that would encompass all sorts of state and semistate organizations, from "quasi-autonomous, nongovernmental organizations" ("quangos")⁶⁵ to paramilitary groups, but still, unfortunately, within a spectrum of normal state behavior.

The advantage of this framework is that it allows us to locate death squads as a part of a larger historical trend, while still allowing for the specifics of each individual instance of their use. At the same time, it permits the inclusion of nonstate or nongovernmental actors, for whether states instigate death squad violence or merely tolerate it, such violence is symptomatic of the same crisis. This is important, for the extent of nonstate initiative in death squads is often

underestimated. Finally, this explanation leaves room for state weakness or lack of legitimacy to be considered as contributing factors.

Conclusion

It may be that the trend toward subcontracting that characterizes modern states signals enough of a blurring of the traditional definition of a state that we will need to develop a new one, or perhaps that we will need to begin speaking of a "postmodern" state that can be and not be at the same time.⁶⁶ In any case, we can now see one of the roots of death squad use in more conventional forms of state behavior and stop trying to measure how a state's weakness or its condition of dependency made it turn to death squads. Sadly, the historical context introduced here does not provide any grounds for optimism that the use of death squads is likely to end soon. Quite the contrary: they are likely to become a more frequent phenomenon.⁶⁷ The end of the Cold War has brought an increase in small wars, domestic revolts, and ethnically or nationally based conflicts. Meanwhile, the demands placed on states by the sheer complexity of modern life continue to grow, and therefore the habit of subcontracting, which contributes to the formation of death squads in already violent situations, is likely only to grow stronger. It is ironic, in a world of nearly endemic "ethnic" and nationalist conflict, that the strong, unitary state, the very agent that should (theoretically) support and defend these essentialist identities, is in such decline.⁶⁸ This is not to say that the death squads themselves will not change to fit new contexts or will not react to moves designed to stop them. There is already evidence, for example, that state-sponsored killers are working harder to hide evidence of their acts, in order to escape punishment from international courts.⁶⁹ It is also likely that continued and better domestic and international scrutiny of violence will cause direct government involvement in death squads to decline. The likely result will unfortunately be a greater degree of private involvement and thus even less control and discipline of the killers than ever before. And yet international scrutiny, the dedication of countless human rights workers, and, not least, the resistance of the victims themselves have had a positive effect in reducing the use of death squads and bringing their members to justice. This, too, will continue.⁷⁰ Death squads will likely never go away completely, but

they can be opposed, exposed, limited, and stigmatized until their use by states becomes unacceptably costly.

Notes

1. One superficial measure of the scale of the problem is the frequency with which the topic appears in the media. For example, a search of the Lexis-Nexis electronic database of major U.S. and international newspapers turned up 147 references to the term "death squad" for the short period from January 1 to September 1, 1999, alone.
2. Death squads are not an easy topic. In a subject so extreme, some disagreement is inevitable. While the other participants in this book have seen the definition this chapter sets out, they do not necessarily agree either with it or with the rest of the analysis that follows. Nor is this meant to be the last word on the subject, not least because all of the papers in this volume, in one way or another, push out the limits of our understanding of the subject and prepare the way for further research.
3. The vast majority of notorious death squad cases have involved the complicity of sovereign states. There are very few cases where insurgent groups have created true death squads. Examples might include special groups alleged to have been set up by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) or the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Even here, however, the insurgent groups in question have aspired or claimed to represent a not as yet recognized state in the making, and have claimed state powers and legitimacy.
4. The literature from human rights organizations takes particular pains to stress government control over death squads in order to emphasize accountability, yet in the end even it must admit that death squads often enjoy considerable independence in practice and that they often follow their own agendas. See, for example, Amnesty International, *El Salvador: "Death Squads"—a Government Strategy* (London: Amnesty International, 1988), 1, 3 (note 1), 15–18, 44–45.
5. The definition is the author's, but draws on earlier definitions provided by Amnesty International, *El Salvador*, 1; T. David Mason and Dale A. Krane, "The Political Economy of Death Squads: Toward a Theory of the Impact of State-Sanctioned Terror," *International Studies Quarterly* 33 (1989): 175–98 (here, 178); and the Library of Congress, Bibliographic Category Definition of "death squads," obtained on-line from the Library of Congress electronic catalog, 1995. Further help on the definition has come from Arthur D. Brenner, Cynthia Arnson, Jeffrey Sluka, James Ron, and Allen Feldman.

6. Assassination is defined as the "premeditated murder of a political figure for reasons of the victim's prominence, [or] political perspective." Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 55–56. On the subject, see Thomas H. Snitch, "Terrorism and Political Assassinations: A Transnational Assessment 1968–80," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, no. 463 (September 1982): 54–66; Franklin L. Ford, *Political Murder: From Tyrannicide to Terrorism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).
7. See Ray Abrahams, *Vigilant Citizens: Vigilantism and the State* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998); H. Jon Rosenbaum and Peter C. Sederberg, eds., *Vigilante Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976); Martha K. Huggins, "Vigilantism and the State: A Look South and North," in *Vigilantism and the State in Modern Latin America: Essays on Extralegal Violence*, ed. Martha K. Huggins (New York: Praeger, 1991); or David Kowalewski, "Countermovement Vigilantism and Human Rights, A Propositional Inventory," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 25 (1996): 63–81. In the present volume, see Chapter 5.
8. The definition of vigilantism is a contentious issue; the one offered here is loosely based on material offered in Abrahams, *Vigilant Citizens*, 7–9.
9. This is not to imply that all vigilante groups are completely spontaneous, for many are highly organized and usually involve the active participation of at least local elites, and they may even enjoy the support of the national government.
10. This discussion takes up in modified form the division of vigilantism into three types as outlined in H. Jon Rosenbaum and Peter C. Sederberg, "Vigilantism, an Analysis of Establishment Violence," in Rosenbaum and Sederberg, *Vigilante Politics*, 9–19. Their third category, "regime-control vigilantism," includes the type of activity denoted here as death squads. Also highly useful in drawing the differences between death squads and vigilantism is Abrahams, *Vigilant Citizens*. See also Huggins, *Vigilantism and the State*.
11. On South Africa, see Chapter 9 in this volume; also Peter Harris, "The Role of Right-Wing Vigilantes in South Africa," and Mark Phillips, "Divide and Repress: Vigilantes and State Objectives in Crossroads," both in *States of Terror: Death Squads or Development?* ed. Mike Kirkwood (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1989). On El Salvador, see Chapter 4 in this volume.
12. This distinction is drawn from a highly instrumental reading of the following works: Raymond D. Duvall and Michael Stohl, "Govern-

- nance by Terror," in *The Politics of Terrorism*, 3rd. ed., ed. Michael Stohl (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1988), 231–71; Michael Stohl, "Demystifying Terrorism: The Myths and Realities of Contemporary Political Terrorism," in Stohl, *The Politics of Terrorism*, 1–27; Alex P. Schmid and Albert J. Jongman, *Political Terrorism. A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories and Literature*, 2nd. ed. (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1988), esp. 1–59. Note that the literature on terrorism is particularly voluminous, and there are literally hundreds of definitions. See Schmid and Jongman, *Political Terrorism*, 239–482, for a good bibliography.
13. States often claim that death squads are spontaneous acts of an aggrieved public, or that they are actually agents of an insurgent group, but this is simply to conceal the true state of affairs and is irrelevant to our definition. (See Chapter 10 in this volume for examples of both.) Note that the covert nature of death squads may also serve the secondary purpose of enhancing the terror they generate, since an unnamed threat can be extremely frightening.
14. See Abram de Swaan, "Terror as a Government Service," in *Repression and Repressive Violence*, ed. Mario Hoefnagels (Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger, 1977), 44–45, on the "twilight nature" of knowledge about acts of terror under terrorist regimes. While the publication of the names of potential victims or of target lists may well be considered terrorism, without their subsequent murder by organized groups, it cannot be considered an instance of death squad activity.
15. Examples of this abound. See, for example, Chapter 4 below.
16. See, for example, Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1990* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 67–70.
17. The Brazilian death squads examined by Martha Huggins in Chapter 8 of this volume are a perfect example.
18. For example, this is well documented in the case of Serbian paramilitary groups that functioned as death squads in Bosnia and Croatia. See below, Chapter 11.
19. See Chapter 4 below.
20. In some cases, the conventional armed forces may be put off by the illegality of death squads (even if they do not step in to stop them), or they may simply be repelled by the ad hoc nature of death squads or their perceived lack of discipline. As an example, the Yugoslav Federal Army preferred to leave "ethnic cleansing" and other brutal acts in Bosnia to the privately organized paramilitary groups. In a similar fashion, the conventional military often felt rivalry with private death squads in El Salvador, yet cooperated with them and even formed their own. Clearly, though, this varies from case to case, and

many professional armies or police forces have no difficulty working with, or even acting as, death squads.

21. See Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1995).
22. See, for example, the Weimar German case in Chapter 3, below.
23. For example, Amnesty International, *Political Killings by Governments* (London: Amnesty International, 1983); Amnesty International, *El Salvador*; and Ben Penglase, *Final Justice: Police and Death Squad Homicides of Adolescents in Brazil* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1994). See also Kirkwood, *States of Terror*, which lies at the border of human rights and academic studies.
24. For example, "El Salvador's Reborn Death Squads," *Economist*, 13 November 1993, 52; "Chronicle of a Death Foretold," *Economist*, 9 September 1995, 50-51; "A Chilling Tale," *Economist*, 9 December 1995, 45-46; Tony Stark, "Masked Gunmen and Death Squads in Drag," *New Statesman and Society* 5, no. 218 (4 September 1992): 18-20; Anne Nelson and Cynthia Arnson, "Death Squads, D'Aubuisson and 'Democracy,'" *Nation*, 28 January 1984, 88-90; Lucia Annunziata, "The Death Squads," *Nation*, 31 March 1984, 372-73; and Christopher Dickey, "Behind the Death Squads: Who They Are, How They Work, and Why No One Can Stop Them," *New Republic* 189, no. 26 (1983): 16-21.
25. A good, if by now somewhat dated, summary may be found in Schmid and Jongman, *Political Terrorism*, 72-79 and 259-69. A similar, more up-to-date one may be found in Miles D. Wolpin, "State Terrorism and Death Squads in the New World Order," in *The Culture of Violence*, eds. Kumar Rupesinghe and Marcial Rubio C. (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1994), 200-216. The following draws heavily on Wolpin in its topology of the literature.
26. Aside from those discussed below, see George A. Lopez and Michael Stohl, eds., *Dependence, Development, and State Repression* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989); Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez, *Terrible Beyond Endurance? The Foreign Policy of State Terrorism* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988); George A. Lopez, *Terrorism and World Order*, *The Whole Earth Papers*, no. 18 (New York: Global Education Associates, 1983); Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez, *The State as Terrorist: The Dynamics of Governmental Violence and Repression* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984).
27. Duvall and Stohl, "Governance by Terror," 231-71 (quotation from 255).
28. Duvall and Stohl, "Governance by Terror," 256-62.
29. Michael Stohl, "The Superpowers and International Terrorism," in *Government Violence and Repression: An Agenda for Research*, eds.

- Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1986), 207-34, esp. 212.
30. Ted Robert Gurr, "The Political Origins of State Violence and Terror: A Theoretical Analysis," in Stohl and Lopez, *Government Violence and Repression*, 46-48.
31. Johan Galtung, "Cultural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research* 27, no. 3 (1990): 291-305; Carolyn Nordstrom and JoAnn Martin, eds., *The Paths to Domination, Resistance, and Terror* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).
32. Alexander Dallin and George W. Breslauer, *Political Terror in Communist Systems* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970); Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 440.
33. Conway W. Henderson, "Conditions Affecting the Use of Political Repression," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35, no. 1 (1991): 120-42; Gernot Kohler, "Global Apartheid," in *Toward a Just World Order*, eds. Richard Falk, Samuel S. Kin, and Saul H. Mendlovitz (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1982), 1: 315-25. See also Mason and Krane, "Political Economy of Death Squads."
34. Johan Galtung, "Self-Reliance: An Overdue Strategy for Transition," in Falk et al., 602-622.
35. Richard E. Rubenstein, *Alchemists of Revolution: Terrorism in the Modern World* (New York: Basic Books, 1987); Harry E. Vanden, "Terrorism, Law, and State Policy in Central America: The Eighties," *New Political Science* 18/19 (Fall/Winter 1990). See also the literature on the activities of the CIA, for example, John Stockwell, *Praetorian Guard: The U.S. Role in the New World Order* (Boston: South End Press, 1991); Philip Agee, *Inside the Company: CIA Diary* (New York: Bantam Books, 1975); and Edward Herman, *The Real Terror Network* (Boston: South End Press, 1982).
36. Among the best scholars on vigilantism are Sederberg and Abrahams.
37. Peter C. Sederberg, "The Phenomenology of Vigilantism in Contemporary America: An Interpretation," in Rosenbaum and Sederberg, *Terrorism*, 287-305 (here, 297).
38. One reason for this is that the academy still organizes specialization mainly along national lines. Good examples of the literature include Martin van Bruinessen, "Turkey's Death Squads," *Middle East Report* 26, no. 2 (April-June 1996): 20-23; and Justus M. Van der Kroef, "Terrorism by Authority: The Case of the Death Squads of Indonesia and the Philippines," *Current Research on Peace and Violence* 10, no. 4 (1987): 143-58. Several of the contributors to this present volume have also published important academic case studies.

39. Mason and Krane, "The Political Economy of Death Squads," 175-98. See also William Anthony Lavelle, "State Terrorism and the Death Squad: A Study of the Phenomenon" (M.A. thesis, California State University, Sacramento, 1992), reprinted as unclassified Technical Information Report by the Defense Information Agency, Alexandria, VA, 1993. This is largely a summary of existing research.
40. Miles D. Wolpin, *State Terrorism and Death Squads in the New World Order*, Peace Research Reviews 12, no. 3 (Dundas, Canada: Peace Research Institute, 1992); Wolpin, "State Terrorism and Death Squads in the New World Order," 200-16.
41. He includes Lebanon in 1970s and '80s, Colombia in the 1940s, and possibly even Sri Lanka in the 1990s. Wolpin, *State Terrorism*, 38.
42. See Wolpin, *State Terrorism*, 42-44. Many of his arguments in this context are very similar to the work of Ted Robert Gurr, cited above.
43. Jeffrey Sluka, ed., *Death Squad: The Anthropology of State Terror* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).
44. Other books that don't deal directly with death squads but sometimes discuss them peripherally and that are particularly useful in understanding the subject include Allen Feldman, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); María José Moyano, *Argentina's Lost Patrol: Armed Struggle 1969-1978* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Hans Werner Tobler and Peter Waldmann, eds., *Staatliche und parastaatliche Gewalt in Lateinamerika* (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert Verlag, 1991).
45. T. David Mason and Dale A. Krane, "The Political Economy of Death Squads: Toward a Theory of the Impact of State-Sanctioned Terror," *International Studies Quarterly* 33 (1989): 175-98. See also Steven Jackson et al., "Conflict and Coercion," *Conflict Resolution* 22, no. 4 (December 1978): 627-57.
46. This was a factor in the use of death squads in El Salvador, for example. See Chapter 4 below.
47. See, for example, Michael Ignatieff, "Human Rights: The Midlife Crisis," *New York Review of Books*, 20 May 1999, 58-62. See also Geoffrey Best, *War and Law Since 1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); and Michael Howard, George J. Andreopoulos and Mark R. Shulman, eds., *The Laws of War: Constraints on Warfare in the Western World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).
48. Indeed, most of the scholarly work on state violence would be impossible without this scrutiny.

49. Death squad members who talk or are suspected of being liable to talk are also themselves prime candidates for murder. See, for example, chapters 8, 9, and 10 in this volume.
50. This should not be taken as license to blame human rights activists or the media, however; the responsibility for the use of all state violence, covert or open, lies with states and their ruling elites alone.
51. Wolpin, "State Terrorism," 222-23. This idea bears further research.
52. Wolpin, "State Terrorism"; Galtung, "Self-Reliance"; Sluka, *Death Squad*; Nicholas Werz, "Die Ideologische Wurzeln der 'Doktrin der nationalen Sicherheit' in Lateinamerika," in Tobler and Waldmann, 163-92; and Moyano, *Argentina's Lost Patrol*.
53. Werz, "Die Ideologische Wurzeln"; George A. Lopez, "National Security Ideology as an Impetus to State Violence and State Terror," in Stohl and Lopez, *Government Violence and Repression*, 73-95; David Pion-Berlin, "The Ideological Governance of Perception in the Use of State Terror in Latin America: The Case of Argentina," in *State Organized Terror: The Case of Violent Internal Repression*, eds. P. Timothy Bushnell et al. (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1991), 135-52.
54. Lavelle, "State Terrorism," 15-23, for example, conflates death squads and all other forms of state terrorism and therefore argues that death squads existed far back in recorded history.
55. The paradox here is precisely that death squads represent a violation of the state's monopoly over the use of violence, but that is part of what makes them worthy of scholarly analysis.
56. Even where death squads are simply the tools of governments, they are usually used against insurgent or protest movements that themselves have a notion of citizenship as a precondition.
57. See, for example, Wyn Craig Wade, *The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987); David M. Chambers, *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989); Scott Nelson, *Iron Confederacies: Southern Railways, Klan Violence, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).
58. Note, too, that the proto-death squads investigated by Michael Schroeder in Chapter 2 of this volume also existed during a period of modernization.
59. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, eds. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 78.
60. Tilly, *Coercion*, esp. 1-33.
61. Hagen Schulze, *Staat und Nation in der Europäischen Geschichte*, 2nd ed. (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1995); Tilly, *Coercion*; Dieter Grimm, ed., *Staatsaufgaben* (Suhrkamp: Frankfurt am Main, 1996).

62. In most countries today, local Scout organizations are nominally private but enjoy a high degree of government support while serving as an adjunct to government in many ways. For example, scouting teaches patriotism and other citizenship skills, and, at least at its origin, served to prepare adolescents for military service.
63. For example, see Mustafa O. Attir, Burkart Holzner, and Zdenek Suda, eds., *Directions of Change: Modernization Theory, Research, and Realities* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1981); Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997); Meredith W. Watts, *Xenophobia in United Germany: Generations, Modernization, and Ideology* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Modernisierungstheorie und Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975).
64. Of course, states using death squads do so as part of a calculated risk. They are usually not meant to be permanent institutions, only temporary tools whose expiration should coincide with the end of the state of crisis. Thus the state doesn't consider itself to be risking its sovereignty any more than it believes it is actually risking its security and existence when it goes to war.
65. An example of a quango is the mixed private and public Training and Enterprise Councils in England. See "How to Control Quangos," *Economist*, 6 August 1994, 45-47.
66. See, variously, Hans-Georg Betz, *Postmodern Politics in Germany: The Politics of Resentment* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991); J. Peter Burgess, ed., *Cultural Politics and Political Culture in Postmodern Europe* (Amsterdam and Atlanta, Ga.: Rodopi, 1997); Leslie Paul Thiele, *Thinking Politics: Perspectives in Ancient, Modern, and Postmodern Political Theory* (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers, 1997); Stephen K. White, *Political Theory and Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
67. For a more extended discussion of the factors likely to lead to the continued use of death squads, see Wolpin, "State Terrorism," 198-99, 224-26; and Wolpin, *State Terrorism*, 1, 45-46.
68. Of course, the rise of competing essentialist identities within formerly quiet states, such as newly militant ethnic minorities, for example, may indeed be one source of state decline.
69. On the concealment of evidence, see John Daniszewski, "Evidence Details Systematic Plan of Killings in Kosovo . . .," *Los Angeles Times*, 8 August 1999, 1.
70. For example, domestic human rights organizations seem to be multiplying, growing in sophistication, and building useful links to foreign counterparts in many violent states. See Ignatieff, "Human Rights."